



Town of  
*Westford*  
Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

March 2014



Jodi Ross,  
Town  
Manager

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Watch Meetings Online

**westford**  
*CAT*

[www.westfordcat.org](http://www.westfordcat.org)

**Dear Westford residents,**

What a great job our Highway Department has done keeping our roads cleared during this very snowy and icy winter season. I would like to send them a special thank you for doing a phenomenal job, and for the long hours they have spent behind the wheel in our sanders/plows. And speaking of great jobs, congratulations to Chip Barrett, our Highway Superintendent, who was designated Public Works Leadership Fellow by the American Public Works Association for his "Vision and Leadership from the Top".

I would also like to thank our Firefighters who, when not busy saving lives, assist with clearing snow around the cisterns (water in a tank underground used for firefighting). We have approximately 30 of them around town - mostly in areas out of our water district. A special thank you to Captain Valcourt, Lt Britko, and Firefighter/EMT or Paramedics Bellemore, Svatek, Florio, DeVincentis, Searles, and Anderson for helping to keep these cisterns cleared and ready to use if necessary.

Our schools just received recognition as 1 of 8 Best in Nation High Schools from 1,300 teams in the second Verizon Innovative App Challenge. Westford Academy will receive a \$20,000 grant to help build the team's app and advance STEM education. Congratulations to the advisor Anne Stowe, and all of the students who participated.

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, Pan Am Railways experienced a train derailment of between 12 and 15 train cars. No one from Pan Am notified the town of this accident. Our own Fire Chief Joe Targ stumbled upon the derailment while traveling through town. Although we attempted to call officials at Pan Am immediately after discovering the derailment, we were told all officials were in meetings and unable to take our calls. We traveled to the scene to investigate, and when we located the General Manager at the site, he called the police to get "trespassers" off Pan Am's property. At the direction of the Board of Selectmen, I sent a letter to our state and federal officials seeking their assistance in imposing regulations on Pan Am that a town must be notified in the event of a derailment, in particular with a hazardous substance, as in this case, two of the cars had non-odorized Liquid Petroleum Gas in them. Click here to review these and other letters and documents relative to this issue. [Pan Am Railways Documents](#)

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued new regulations pertaining to Open Burning Permits. The major change is that during the last two years they made a daily recommendation to our own Fire Department on whether or not to issue permits - now it is their decision. If our town chooses to allow burning on the days they do not issue permits, our town may be fined.

On February 14th, our town received notification from the owners of 64 Main Street (Agnew Parcel) of their intent to sell their property, which is 26.44 acres and has been assessed as Chapter 61B land. The town has the right of first refusal and 120 days to act to exercise its option to purchase the property. Our boards are reviewing the parcel at this time and will make a recommendation over the next month or so.

(continued on next page)

Our Annual Town Meeting is swiftly approaching, and will be held Saturday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the Abbot Elementary School. Please join us while we discuss and vote the following articles:

**Article 1:** Accept the Reports of Town Officers, Boards and Committees for the Fiscal Year 2013.

**Article 2:** Move to dismiss – we have no unpaid prior year bills.

**Article 3:** Approve FY14 supplemental appropriations – appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$109,552 in order to supplement the following FY14 budgets: 442 Wastewater Treatment Management Expense \$106,702.00, 491 Cemetery Personal Services \$2,850.00, and in accordance with the Joint Labor Management Committee arbitration award for FY12 to FY14 appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$67,874 in order to supplement the FY14 220 Fire Department Personal Services Operating, \$25,235 to supplement the FY14 640 Ambulance Enterprise Personal Services operating budget. Also \$71,970 to fund the Communication Workers of America and Westford Public Works Association labor agreements which were ratified on March 11th.

**Article 4:** Move to dismiss – we have no FY14 budget transfer requests.

**Article 5:** Appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$250,000 to provide funds to address associated issues regarding perchlorate contamination remediation.

**Article 6:** Accept the provisions of MGL Chp 40 Sec 5B in order to establish a Health Insurance Stabilization Fund and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$500,000 to be deposited in said fund, to allow us to reduce the health insurance operating budget from a 12% increase to an 8% increase.

**Article 7:** Appropriate from insurance receipts reserved in accordance with MGL Chp 44, Sec 53 the sum of \$45,194 for repairs to the Roudenbush buildings located at 65 Main Street, 73 Main Street, and 170 Plain Road.

**Article 8:** Appropriate from the sale of cemetery lots receipts reserved in accordance with MGL Chp 114, Sec 15 the sum of \$75,000 for care, improvements and embellishments, or the enlargement of the Fairview and Pine Grove Cemeteries.

**Article 9:** Appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$1,915,665 to provide for town capital projects, and appropriate from water enterprise retained earnings the sum of \$310,000 to allow for capital requests, borrow the sum of \$400,000 for making water system improvements on Graniteville Road from Main Street to Patriot Lane, and borrow \$660,000, for making water system improvements on Pleasant Street from Abbot Street to Pine Street, and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$850,000 to the capital stabilization fund.

**Article 10:** Approve the borrowing of \$2,802,362 by the Nashoba Valley Technical School District, for paying costs of the Accelerated Roof Repair Project at the Nashoba Valley Technical High School, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA") and further that any grant that District may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) 52.26% of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA.

**Article 11:** Appropriate and borrow the sum of \$4,101,750 to be expended under the direction of the School Committee, in conjunction with oversight by the Permanent Town Building Committee, for completing the design, bidding and construction phases of two window and door replacement projects at the Colonel John Robinson School and the Norman E. Day School for which the Town has applied for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA").

**Article 12:** Appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000 for professional services to recommend concepts for reconfiguration, relocation or reconstruction of the center station and examine the feasibility of consolidating emergency communications operations and the relocation of the Technology Department currently located in the former Forge Village substation into the center station.

**Article 13:** Appropriate from Community Preservation Funds the sum \$660,931 for projects recommended by the Community Preservation Committee.

**Article 14:** Amend the Pay Classification Plan for non-unionized municipal employees, effective July 1, 2014, to increase the band from 1 to 2 for the Human Resources Administrative Assistant, the Director of Health Care Services to become Health Director and go from a band 6 to a band 7, and the Public Health Nurse to be raised from a band 3 to a band 4.

**Article 15:** Authorize revolving funds for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015.

**Article 16:** Appropriate the sum of \$102,050,389 for the operation and maintenance of town departments for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

(continued on next page)

- Article 17:** Appropriate a sum of money for highway maintenance from the proceeds due to the town under the provisions of [MGL Chapter 90](#).
- Article 18:** Approve the application for the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) Local Incentive Program, and approve the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreement between the town and Cynosure, Inc at 3-5 Carlisle Road and make applications to the Massachusetts Economic Assistance Coordinating Council relating to the project as described in the TIF Agreement.
- Article 19:** Accept the provisions of [MGL Chapter 73, Section 4 of the Acts of 1986, as amended by Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988](#), by providing for additional property exemptions for qualified residents who may be blind, elderly, surviving spouses or minors, or who are disabled veterans, and to continue the present percentage increase of 100%.
- Article 20:** Grant the Trustees of the J. V. Fletcher Public Library the authority to apply for, accept, and expend any state grants which may be available for a feasibility study for the current and future needs of the Library.
- Article 21:** Authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter an Amendment to the Service Agreement between the town and Acme Waste Services Inc. with an effective date of July 1, 2010, for the collection and transportation of solid waste, to extend the term of the Service Agreement from five years to eight years.
- Article 22:** Authorize the Board of Selectmen, during FY15, to accept any and all easements for sidewalk, drainage, or other utility purposes, as they may deem in the town's best interests.
- Article 23:** Establish the annual fee for the licensing of dogs in the following amounts: \$15 for each spayed or neutered dog and \$20 for each intact dog.
- Article 24:** Citizen petition asking voters to adopt (this) World Flag and show their support for the flying of the World Flag at the Crisafulli School and on Earth Day on the Westford Common.
- Article 25:** Authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Westford Historic Commission to grant a perpetual historic preservation restriction, encumbering certain property and buildings thereon, at 2-4 Boston Road, said restriction to be upon the land, the exterior and interior of the building known as the Westford Museum and on the exterior only of the building known as the Fire Department Cottage.
- Article 26:** Amend General Bylaw Chapter 61: Hazardous Materials Storage, as set forth in the hand-out on file at the office of the Town Clerk, in the motion document you will receive at town meeting, and also available in the Health Department office.
- Article 27:** Amend General Bylaw Chapter 22 Finance Committee to allow 60 days (instead of immediately) after the close of the fiscal year, the town manager (previously finance director) to compile statements regarding the appropriated and expended amounts during the prior fiscal year, and an analysis of the adequacy of the appropriations and revenue estimates for the current fiscal year.
- Article 28:** In reference to the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana Act; make changes stating that this bylaw does not apply to the consumption of marijuana on the premises of a Registered Marijuana Dispensary, registered and regulated by the State Department of Public Health.
- Article 29:** Adopt a new General Bylaw Chapter 170 to rename the town-owned parcels of land known as the Stepinski parcel and East Boston Camps with new names reflecting the Town of Westford ownership of this property as Stony Brook Conservation Land. The camps on this parcel will retain their current name of "East Boston Camps."
- Article 30:** Amend Zoning Bylaws to include a reference to the Medical Marijuana Overlay District established in a location suitable for a lawful medical marijuana facility and to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent properties, residential neighborhoods, and locations where minors congregate by regulating the siting, design, placement, security and removal of the facility.
- Article 31:** Amend our Flood Plan Overlay District in line with FEMA requirements. You can view the maps here: [FEMA 2014 FIRM](#) (Flood Insurance Rate Map).
- Article 32:** Accept as public ways the roads of Hidden Valley Road, Musket Lane, and Sawmill Road.
- Article 33:** Transfer the care, custody, control and management of the following parcels of Assessors' Map 45, Parcel 83.20, located on Briarwood Drive from the Tax Possession Sale Committee to the Board of Selectmen for general municipal purposes.
- Article 34:** Transfer the care, custody, control and management of the following parcels of Assessors' Map 21, Parcel 14, located on Flagg Road from the Tax Possession Sale to the Conservation Commission to be held for conservation purposes.
- Article 35:** Transfer the care, custody, control and management of the following parcels of Assessors' Map 21, Parcel 103, located on Hildreth Street from the Tax Possession Sale Committee to the Conservation Commission to be held for conservation purposes.

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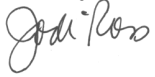


As you are preparing for town meeting please be on the look-out for bears coming out of winter hibernation. Selectman Chair Andrea Peraner-Sweet was startled to find a large black bear (photos below) in her fenced back yard on a recent Sunday filling his or her belly with bird seed. Last I heard she planned to take the bird feeder down and was not planning to put it out again following this incident.

There are several openings on local boards and committees, including the Affordable Housing Committee, Agricultural Commission, Bylaw Review Committee, Communications Advisory, Cultural Council, Energy Committee, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, Pedestrian Safety, Permanent Town Building Committee, and others. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees and if you have interest, complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link, or in the town manager's office: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

I hope to see you at town meeting.

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross



## **Council On Aging - Coming Events**

### **SPAGHETTI DINNER**

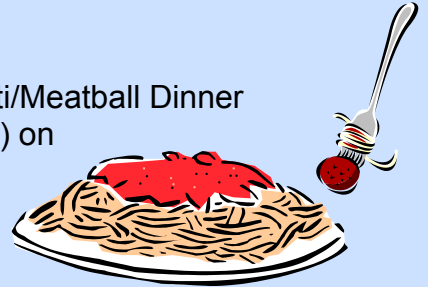
The Westford Police Association invites you to join them at a Spaghetti/Meatball Dinner (you can have your choice of just spaghetti or spaghetti and meatballs) on Friday, March 21st at the Franco American Club between 5 and 9 PM.

Dinner will be served around 5 PM. Entertainment provided.

This is FREE to all Senior Citizens age 60 and over.

Raffle prizes will be donated by local businesses.

Seniors must call the Cameron Senior Center at 978-692-5523 to reserve their dinner seat.



### **REGENCY LUNCH AND LEARN**

Join us at Cameron the second Friday of every month starting April 11th at 12:15 PM.

We will offer a light lunch provided by the Regency Inn and an informative and fun session to follow.

Space is limited so register early by calling 978-692-5523.

April 11th is jewelry making (choice of necklace or bracelet) with a \$5 fee for supplies.

### **LUNCH SERVED ON WEEKDAYS AT CAMERON SENIOR CENTER**

The Merrimack Valley Nutrition Program provides anyone

age 60 and over with low cost nutritional meals at Cameron, Monday – Friday at 11:30 AM.

Please call 978-692-5523 a minimum of two days in advance

between 8:00 - 10:00 AM to make your reservation.

The donation is \$2.00. If spouse/partner is under the age of 60, the meal cost is \$4.50.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation offers various trips to local business establishments such as Market Basket, hairdressers, drug stores, department stores and medical facilities.

Trips to Cameron Senior Center and social calls to your friends are also available.

Please call 978-399-2322 or email [lmitchell@westfordma.gov](mailto:lmitchell@westfordma.gov) as soon as you know you need transportation. Roundtrip fares are \$3 within Westford; \$6 to neighboring towns; and \$8 to outlying towns. If school is closed due to inclement weather, transportation does not operate.

To view the complete  
Council On Aging Newsletter  
please visit our website at:

[www.westfordma.gov/coa](http://www.westfordma.gov/coa) and click on [Newsletters](#).

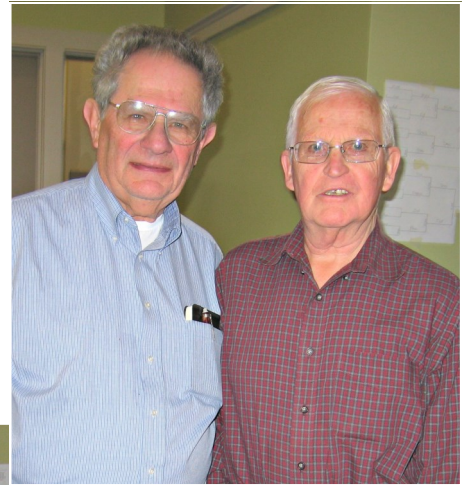


Westford Senior Center



## **Council on Aging News**

### **Pool Tournament**



**Held on  
February 18th  
at Cameron  
Senior Center**



**Peter Mudgett  
(tournament  
organizer)  
presents  
trophy to the  
tournament's  
champion  
Michael Priest**



## Tax Collector's Office

**Greetings from the Tax Collector's office!** The first 2014 Motor Vehicle Excise Tax bills are due on Monday, March 17, 2014. If you have not already done so, please make every effort to submit your payment to avoid interest and penalties. If you no longer have the vehicle and don't believe that you owe for the whole calendar year, it is very important that you pay the bill and then file the proper application and supporting documentation with the Assessor's office. If abatement is granted by the Board of Assessors, you will receive a refund for the abated amount. More information about abatements can be found on the Board of Assessor's page on the Town's website.

Every excise tax season we hear the question, "How did you come up with that value for my car?" or "Why is the excise tax on my older car higher than the excise tax on my newer car?" These are very reasonable questions. The answer begins with the value of the car in the year of manufacture and the rest is determined by the state formula. The valuation formula for excise tax purposes is set by state law. The State describes the billing and valuation process as follows:

**Billing:** Excise bills are prepared by the Registry of Motor Vehicles according to the information on the motor vehicle registration. They are sent to city or town assessors who commit them to the local tax collectors for distribution and collection of payment. Cities and towns may also prepare their own bills based on excise data sent by the Registry in conformity with Registry requirements.

**Bill Computation:** An excise at the rate of \$25 per one thousand dollars of valuation is levied on each motor vehicle. Information on the value of a motor vehicle is accessed electronically through a data bank complete with valuation figures. Different sources provide the valuation figures depending upon whether the motor vehicle is an automobile, a truck, a motorcycle, or a trailer. For example, automobile valuations are derived from figures published in the National Automobile Dealers Association Official Used Car Guide (NADA), to which the Registry has electronic access. Most public libraries have copies of NADA and other motor vehicle official guides. Figures are the manufacturers' list prices for vehicles in their year of manufacture. Present market value, price paid, or condition are not considered for excise tax purposes. The excise tax law (M.G.L. c.60A, s.1) establishes its own formula for valuation for state tax purposes whereby only the manufacturer's list price and the age of the motor vehicle are considered. The formula is as follows:

<i>In the year preceding the model year (brand new car released before model year)</i>	50%
<i>In the model year</i>	90%
<i>In the second year</i>	60%
<i>In the third year</i>	40%
<i>In the fourth year</i>	25%
<i>In the fifth and succeeding years</i>	10%



The state formula takes the manufacturer's list price in the year of manufacture and multiplies that by the % from the chart above based on the age of the car to get the excise valuation. That valuation is used to calculate the tax based upon \$25 per \$1,000 of value. The chart above shows how the valuation declines steadily for five years according to the state formula. But at the end of five years, the value does not go down any more. So, if the manufacturer's list price for your car was \$30,000 in the model year, for example a 2014 vehicle in calendar year 2014, the excise tax calculation would be \$30,000 X 90% (excise value of \$27,000) divided by \$1000 = 27, X \$25 = \$675. When that car reaches five years old the excise tax calculation will be based upon \$30,000 X 10% (\$3,000) divided by \$1000 = 3, X \$25=\$75. The bill for that car will remain at \$75 per year for the life of the vehicle. I hope this information is helpful!

Christine Collins, Tax Collector-Treasurer



## J.V. Fletcher Library



### The J . V. Fletcher Library Presents: Ways to “visit” the Library



Most patrons know that when the Library is closed (after hours or on holidays) they can go to their computers and use Library services “remotely.” But did you know that all those same services can also be found via your smart tablet and your smart phone? In the same way that on your computer you pick a browser, like Google Chrome or Safari or Firefox or Internet Explorer 10, you can go to Google Chrome (etc.) on your tablet or smart phone, type in [www.westfordlibrary.org](http://www.westfordlibrary.org) and bring up the Library’s web page. Easier still, there is a Fletcher Library app called Boopsie that offers almost all of the services that our web page does.

Whether you use your computer, or a tablet or your smart phone you can download digital magazines via Zinio, watch streaming films on Indieflix, download music from Freegal, place a book on hold from the Online Catalog, browse our huge variety of databases to sign up for a cooking class, learn a new language or investigate career guide and industry journals to help you with your job searches and so much more. And all FOR FREE!

Westford, take advantage of these resources and widen your world with the Fletcher Library.





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## Veterans Services Department

### Westford Day at Bedford VA Medical Center



On Wednesday, March 5th, 7 of our local veterans boarded a COA shuttle buses with Veterans Service Officer Terry Stader for a day full of healthcare related discussions. Terry had worked with the VA's Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Hospital staff to get local veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare network and to attend an introduction to services at this sprawling facility. The vets learned about how to use the pharmacy and also to get setup with an initial primary care appointment. Some had their initial appointments the very next day! Representatives from various departments discussed social services, billing, respite care, hospice and long term care.

In between our planned training sessions we had time to stop in and have lunch at the Patriot Café. Thanks to one of our resident's generous donation, lunch was free to the veterans who attended.

In the afternoon, the group was introduced to the mental opportunities and about the peer groups that meet there from all branches of services from WWII to OEF/OIF/OND conflicts. Also OT and PT services like the therapy pools,

rock climbing walls and other activities including the relaxing greenhouse (shown above).



Response from the Westford veterans was very enthusiastic. They liked attending as a group because they could all discuss what they heard and discuss how they could take advantage of the service offered by the VA. It was a great opportunity for them to interact one-on-one with the VA staff.

Terry reports that he will repeat this program periodically throughout the year. It was a great way to wrap up in one day, events that would normally happen over the course of weeks. Going down as a group was very much appreciated by the VA staff as well and may very well be a model for other similar events.

[WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV/VETERANS](http://WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV/VETERANS)



## Health Department News



### **National Ground Water Awareness Week March 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 2014**

Clean water is one of the world's most precious resources. People use water every day for a variety of reasons, such as drinking, bathing, recreation, agriculture, cooling, industry, and medical uses. Although water plays an essential role in every person's life, many individuals are not aware that much of their water comes from the ground.

[National Ground Water Awareness Week](#), an annual observance sponsored by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA), is March 9-15, 2014. The purpose of this observance is to stress how important ground water is to the health of all people and the environment. Private wells and public drinking supplies depend on clean ground water.

Groundwater is the water that soaks into the soil from rain or other precipitation and moves downward to fill cracks and other openings in beds of rocks and sand. It is, therefore, a renewable resource, although renewal rates vary greatly according to environmental conditions.

Some ways you as a resident can help protect the groundwater.....

- Maintain your private onsite septic system. Have your septic system pumped every 2-3 years.
- If you have a private drinking water well, have an annual checkup conducted on your well. We recommend testing your well annually for Total Coliform, Nitrates and Nitrites
- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from your well, and maintain a "clean" zone of at least 50 feet between your well and any kennels and livestock operations.
- Maintain proper separation between your well and buildings, waste systems, and chemical storage areas.
- Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the casing (well) to ensure it is in good repair and securely attached. Its seal should keep out insects and rodents.
- Keep your well records in a safe place. These include the construction report, and annual water well system maintenance and water testing results.

To learn more about protecting your private well and drinking supply...

**Well Protection and Water Testing videos:** <http://wellowner.org/basics/well-videos/>

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/GroundWaterAwareness>

<http://www.ngwa.org/Events-Education/awareness/Pages/About-groundwater.aspx>

## **Health Department News (Continued)**

### **SHINGLES PROGRAM STARTED!**

Thanks to the generosity of the community organizations and foundations, over \$11,000 was raised for our Senior Citizen Shingles program. As a result of the funds the department is pleased to announce that a shingles vaccine program has begun for those over 60. This is a wonderful and much requested service helping those over 60 receive a valuable immunization to protect their health. At the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting representatives from Emerson Hospital, Whitney Herrick Foundation, Westford Rotary, Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, and the Westford Charitable Foundation, were recognized by the department and the Selectman for their ongoing support to this community and the Health Department. We thank all our donors for their continued support of our programs!!



*From left to right Peter Mullin- Westford Rotary, Lori Cogliano and Amy McGrath, Westford Charitable Foundation, Leslie Thomas, Emerson Hospital, Mickey Crocker, Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Trish Eckel, Whitney Herrick Foundation and Ron Johnson, Emerson Hospital.*

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### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM**

#### **Beyond The Bruises: Understanding Dating Violence**

Westford Parent Connection, Health Department and Westford Coalition for Non-Violence (WCNV) are co-sponsoring an educational session on dating violence. Hear from professionals from the Alternative House in Lowell about the warning signs of dating violence, and steps you can take as a parent if you suspect your child might be involved in an unhealthy relationship.

Date: March 25

Time: 7-9 pm

Location: Stony Brook School

Presenter: Maria Crocker- Alternative House

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK**

April 7-13, 2014 is National Public Health Awareness Week! During this week, the Westford Health Department and the American Public Health Association (APHA) will highlight the ways that community members can tap into the public health system that keeps us healthy and safe. Join us to find out how you can take preventive measures — in ways big and small — in your families, neighborhoods, workplaces and schools to live longer and healthier lives!



## **Health Department News (Continued)**

### ***Lets Move Event***

***Westford Health Department, partnering with Circle Health, and the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corp, would like to invite the community to a special 'Let's Move Westford' event for families entitled, 'Hula Hoop Jam', on Wednesday, March 19 from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at the Stony Brook Middle School Gym in Westford.***



*Kat Suwalski, a certified Hoopnotica Master Trainer, and several other hooping instructors, will perform a hoop dance with LED hoops followed by a fun, interactive workshop teaching basic hooping moves, skills and games that increase eye-hand coordination, strength, balance and agility!*

*Hoops for the workshop will be provided to the first 100 registrants. Twenty additional, hand-made hoops (32-26") will be raffled off for kid's to take home!*

*Check out Kat and Hoopnotica [wildkathoops.com](http://wildkathoops.com).*

***This event is free, open to the public and appropriate for families with children in grades K-12.***

*Advance reservations are recommended, but not required.*

*For more info or to pre-register, call the Westford Health Dept. at 978-692-5509 or email [intothewoods3@comcast.net](mailto:intothewoods3@comcast.net)*



## Health Department News (Continued)

### TOWN MEETING UPDATE

#### CHAPTER 61 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STORAGE BYLAW (Proposed Revisions for Town Meeting)

##### Why amend the Chapter 61 Hazardous Materials Storage Bylaw and why is it important?

- By amending the current bylaw we can better protect Westford's groundwater, surface water, air quality, and the natural environment by minimizing possible threats of contamination.
- New amendments to the existing bylaw will require better documentation as to where hazardous materials are stored. This will help the Health & Fire Departments identify what Hazardous Materials are being generated, used, and stored in town. In an emergency situation, knowing the location and what types of Hazardous Materials are being stored in a given location can be vital information.
- By adding an inspectional component to the bylaw, we will be able to identify and correct poor storage practices before that is a problem which will help prevent injuries and emergencies.
- To specifically identify locations of all underground, steel fuel oil tanks which were not meant to be buried, before they leak, contaminate the environment, and cost tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars to clean up.

##### What are the primary changes in the revised bylaw?

- Owners will be required to obtain a yearly permit to have tanks and containers containing liquid hazardous materials or waste in quantities greater than 50 gallons.
- Owners will provide information about these tanks, containers, and their contents to the Health Department and Fire Department (if applicable).
- The revised bylaw requires all applicable hazardous material & waste being stored have adequate secondary containment structures in case of leaks/spills.
- Owners of underground fuel storage tanks more than 15 years old must have their tanks initially tested to make sure they are not leaking, then either removed or retested at regular intervals.
- For the first time, annual inspections will be conducted jointly by both the Westford Health Department & Westford Fire Department for all non residential facilities storing above ground hazardous materials. **Home residences will not be inspected** unless there is a threat to safety or to the environment.

##### What about fuel oil tanks in basements or out buildings?

- Basement tanks are considered "aboveground" tanks and do not have to be permitted if they are used to store #2 fuel oil for heating the building or providing hot water. Oil tanks kept in a shed or garage also do not need permits if they store oil used to heat the building or provide hot water. It is important that these tanks be checked regularly to ensure they are not leaking.
- A business that stores oil in aboveground tanks to provide power for manufacturing equipment or other processing equipment is not exempt and must have their tanks permitted.

##### Are any other tanks exempt?

Yes. Tanks used to store propane or liquefied natural gas, whether aboveground or underground are exempt and are not permitted through the Health Department at all. These tanks must be in compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local fire safety regulations

## Recycling Commission News

### Recycling Toter Donated by Girls Scouts goes to Marie Ward

Last April the Westford Girl Scouts Troop 60560 held a fundraiser as part of an educational program with a focus on recycling and saving energy. With the money they raised, they decided to buy a wheeled 64-gallon recycling “toter” from the Westford Recycling Commission with instructions to donate it to someone who couldn’t afford to buy one. “The girls wanted to make someone’s life a little bit better,” says troop leader Lynne McEwan.



That someone has turned out to be Marie Ward of Adams Lane in Westford.

In a recent phone call to a Recycling Commission member, Marie mentioned that due to her advanced age it was becoming difficult to get her recycling to the curb. She regularly fills two trash barrels plus a standard rectangular recycling bin with recyclables, and while her neighbor sometimes helps her out, hoisting those heavy containers is now beyond what she can do.

So the free totter purchased by the Girl Scouts was delivered to Marie last week, and that should make things much easier.

Obviously, Marie is a big recycler. She fills her bins with “Paper by the bucket load,” she says. “There’s not a day of the week that your mailbox isn’t full of paper! And individual drink bottles from me and my husband. And all those laundry detergent containers – those are big items!”

“Recycling and reusing things is a great idea!” says Marie. “Waste is a real problem! Why throw things away if they can be reused?”

Marie is delighted with her new wheeled recycling bin, and says she is “overwhelmed by the generosity of the Girl Scouts and everyone in Westford.”

Wheeled recycling toters can be purchased from the Recycling Commission for \$45. To buy one, send a check payable to “Westford Recycling Commission” to the Town Hall, 55 Main Street, and someone will contact you with instructions when your check is received and cashed.

The WRC recently collaborated with Mr. Whittlesley's 5th grade class at Norman E. Day School to implement Foam Free Fridays, an initiative which replaces styrofoam trays with compostable trays during lunch one day a week. The first Foam Free Friday was February 28. The WRC is working with students and staff to improve recycling of plastics at lunch and has slated composting of food waste at Norman E Day School to begin before the end of the month. The food waste and compostable trays will be transported by volunteers to Fat Moon Farm for composting. This compost will nourish plants (and perhaps a pig or two) and produce fresh, locally grown food for the town.





## **Water Department News**

### **Manganese in Drinking Water**

Manganese is a common naturally-occurring mineral found in rocks, soil, groundwater, and surface water. Not only is manganese naturally found in most foods, it is also an essential trace nutrient in our diets necessary for proper metabolism, immune system function, digestion, bone strength, and as a cofactor in many enzymes. Generally, the principal source of manganese is from food, but drinking water with elevated manganese concentrations can contribute to an increased overall intake of the mineral.

Westford's groundwater contains varying levels of manganese. The Water Department's most recent groundwater testing for manganese (May of 2013) identified manganese levels ranging from non-detected to 1.6 milligrams per liter (mg/L). However, the Water Department utilizes a greensand filtration process that removes most manganese, and samples collected of finished water from the Forge Village and Nutting Road water treatment plants during the May 2013 sampling round were both non-detected (i.e. less than 0.005 mg/L).

In 2013, the Forge and Nutting treatment plants removed manganese at 98 and 96 percent efficiency, respectively resulting in removal of approximately 1.4 tons of manganese from our drinking water!



A quick discussion of Primary and Secondary Contaminants may be helpful. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) differentiates between drinking water contaminants that can present a public health threat (Primary Contaminants) and contaminants that pose cosmetic or aesthetic issues (Secondary Contaminants). Accordingly, the USEPA sets Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for Primary Contaminants that are enforceable standards designed to protect public health, whereas Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels (SMCLs) for Secondary Contaminants are non-enforceable guidelines regulating contaminants that present cosmetic or aesthetic effects in drinking water.

Currently, the USEPA and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) list manganese as a Secondary Contaminant with a SMCL of 0.05 mg/L based on aesthetic concerns. Water containing elevated manganese levels can be discolored (dark, cloudy water), have an unpleasant taste, and stain fixtures.

## **Water Department News (continued)**

### **Manganese in drinking water (continued)**

However, recent studies have suggested that public health risks may exist from the ingestion of elevated levels of manganese. At higher levels manganese can produce neurological effects. Several recent limited studies of children exposed to elevated levels of manganese in drinking water suggest associations with behavioral and neurological effects. In addition, infants may have more difficulty processing manganese than older children and adults due to incompletely developed gastrointestinal tracts and other important metabolic organ systems.

Consequently, the MassDEP created a public outreach initiative to raise awareness regarding manganese in public drinking water. In addition the USEPA and MassDEP have established public health advisory levels for manganese in drinking water. Over a lifetime, the USEPA recommends that people drink water with manganese levels less than 0.3 mg/L, and over the short term, recommends that people limit their consumption of water with manganese levels over 1.0 mg/L over concerns regarding possible neurological effects. In addition, children up to 1 year of age should not be given water with a manganese concentration over 0.3 mg/L, nor should formula for infants be made with that water for longer than 10 days.

The MassDEP has also implemented required manganese testing for Public Water Suppliers in Massachusetts. As noted above, the Westford Water Department already tests for manganese, and will increase sampling frequency based on the new MassDEP requirements. For private well owners, the MassDEP recommends that a baseline sample be collected to determine the concentration in your well water. Thereafter, the well owner should follow the "Private Wells – Testing Parameters and Frequency Guidelines" found on the MassDEP website.

It's important to note that the SMCL is much lower than the public health advisory levels so you would be more likely to have manganese-related taste and/or color issues with your water before reaching the public health advisory levels.

For more information regarding manganese in drinking water visit the Water Department website at [www.westfordma.gov/water](http://www.westfordma.gov/water). Click on the "Education & Outreach" tab and then click on "Manganese in Drinking Water".